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THE CHACONNE IN D MINOR FOR UNACCOMPANIED

VIOLIN BY J.S. BACH

by

CATHERINE ADELE CORNELIUSON

AN ESSAY

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Department of Music for acceptance, an essay entitled The Chaconne in D Minor for Unaccompanied Violin by J.S. Bach, submitted by Catherine Adele Corneliuson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music.

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ABSTRACT

This essay is a study of the Chaconne in D minor for Unaccompanied Violin by Johann Sebastian Bach. The Introduction contains a survey of chaconne-passacaglia compositions in general, and Chapter I is an examination of a passacaglia by Biber and other works by Westhoff, Pisendel and Geminiani for unaccompanied violin which were written before Bach's Chaconne. The second chapter discusses the autograph manuscript and examines the relationship between the Chaconne and the three violin Partitas of Bach. This is followed by a structural analysis of the work itself. Chapter III examines various published editions of the Chaconne, and in its second section discusses some of the problems involved in a public presentation of this work.

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Consider that all this was written
for a single violin!

--Philipp Spitta: J.S. Bach, 1899.

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violinist

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Scherzo: Allegro
Finale: Allegro

CHACONNE IN D MINOR J. S. Bach

INTERMISSION

SONATE IN G MINOR C. Debussy

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Intermède
Finale

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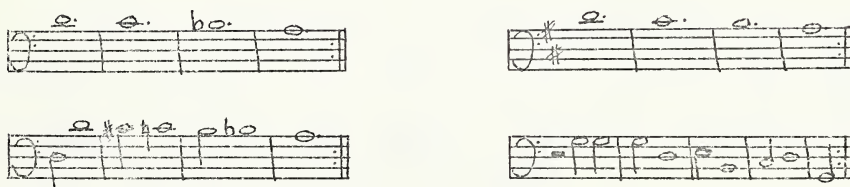
Monday, June 21, at 8:30 p.m. in Convocation Hall—Violin Recital—Yasuko Tanaka, with Isobel Moore Rolston, pianist. Works by Mozart, Beethoven and Debussy. Admission free.

Friday, July 2, at 8:30 p.m. in Convocation Hall—French Horn Recital—David Hoyt, assisted by Kenneth Murdoch, pianist, and Arthur Querengesser, tenor. Works by Beethoven, Richard Strauss and Britten. Admission free.

INTRODUCTION

The chaconne and passacaglia both appeared in Europe around 1600. Composers used these terms indiscriminately, and modern attempts to arrive at a clear distinction are arbitrary and give little insight into the historical development of either the terms themselves or of the forms associated with them.¹

The passacaglia and chaconne were both based upon an ostinato figure which was usually the descending tetrachord in one of its three forms: minor, major, or chromatic. A fourth type consisted of a sequence of fourths and a cadence formula. Other basses combined the four types, varied the rhythms, inverted the direction of the intervals, or used figuration.



Ex. 1. Ostinato Bass Patterns.

The passacaglia was usually written on an ostinato

¹Manfred F. Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era (New York: W. W. Norton, 1947), pp. 41-42.

bass, and variations were limited to the thematic content. In the chaconne, however, the theme of the bass was frequently utilized in other voices, and parts of the harmonized melody were often found interposed throughout the variation. Because of their characteristic similarities, many chaconne ostinato patterns were adapted to passacaglia treatment, and thus the two forms came to be used indiscriminately. It was this interchange of both forms during the early part of the seventeenth century that is responsible for the inaccurate assumptions regarding the individuality and initial treatment of each form.

In the seventeenth century, the chaconne found its way into the European dance suite as a folk dance of Spanish origin. The word chacona was first documented in Spanish literature in 1599. It is included in a work called El Entremes del Plátillo, written by Simon Aguado for the wedding of Phillip III of Spain.¹

Like the chaconne, the passacaglia was also first documented in Spain. The original form of the work, pasacalle (from pasar, "to walk" and calle, "street"), occurs in the literature at least as early as 1605.²

¹See Thomas Walker, "Ciaconna and Passacaglia: Remarks on their Origin and Early History". Journal of the American Musicological Society, XXI (1968), pp. 300-320.

²Ibid., p. 303. This reference appears in the anonymous prose fiction, Picara Justina.

The first Italian sources in the history of the chaconne and passacaglia appeared in the guitar books of Girolamo Montesardo of Florence in 1606. Their function was similar to that of the ritornello in other musical genres. Until 1625, the words passacaglia and ritornello were practically synonymous. At this time, however, the passacaglia began to penetrate other musical media taking on a new meaning altogether. In 1627, Frescobaldi concluded his Secondo libro di toccate with thirty Partite sopra passacagli, each consisting of a four-measure harmonic ostinato with varied figuration. From the guitar books, Frescobaldi borrowed the simple succession of tonic-subdominant-dominant harmonies and inserted a passing harmony on the seventh degree after the initial tonic chord. Thus the passacaglia, while retaining for many years the possibilities for its use as a ritornello, acquired an additional and gradually predominant function of ostinato.

Variations over the ostinato bass began around 1623, and became quite frequent both in vocal and instrumental music after 1630 ("Zefiro torna" from Monteverdi's Scherzi Musicali of 1632). Frescobaldi, the first composer to treat the passacaglia as an ostinato form, was also the first to juxtapose the chaconne and passacaglia for the sake of contrast. In the 1637 edition of Frescobaldi's Primo libro di toccate, there is a composition entitled Cento partite sopra passacagli, in which sections called "passacagli" and "ciaccona" are placed side by side. Frescobaldi is so free in his treatment of the "ciaccona" that he presents it in the minor mode, an unusual

practice at this time. The very work which sets up a conscious contrast between the passacaglia and the chaconne is, then, one of the sources of confusion between the two forms.

The chaconne dance form spread from Spain to Italy and France, and then to Germany. In France, the composers of the middle seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries became accustomed to treating the chaconne in a free style and with a compound ostinato bass which was used independently in all voices. Lully, who made extensive use of the ostinato principle, made the chaconne the customary ending to his operas. Its use in such a place became a convention of the operas written around the turn of the eighteenth century. Like Frescobaldi, Lully treated the principle with considerable freedom: he used variations of a rhythmic pattern rather than strict ground basses. The stereotyped descending tetrachord only appeared at times in the course of one of his compositions, as in Roland, for example. In choral chaconnes, the bass was varied to an even greater extent--by modulation and melodic inversion. The modulating ground bass moved through closely-related keys, and the bass repetitions in each key established harmonically-unified parts through which the chaconne acquired both harmonic expansion and unity. Lully gained further harmonic unification by the juxtaposition of large key areas: the first and third sections enclosed a middle section in the tonic minor key or in the relative major key. Through this practice, the chaconne became a large

tripartite form. It was this French chaconne style which Johann Sebastian Bach generally chose when composing music of the chaconne-passacaglia type.

Chaconnes were a favorite type of composition of composers of the baroque era because of the opportunities which they afforded for the use of variation technique and for the different possible combinations of polyphonic composition. This was especially true of music written for either the organ or the clavier, since the ostinato bass was particularly suited to the nature of these instruments. However, in the case of the unaccompanied solo violin, the means for attaining variety are more limited. Therefore, the composer's problem is more difficult. From this standpoint, the composition of Bach's Chaconne in D Minor for violin, which uses a variation format of gigantic conception, was one of the most challenging tasks attempted during the period. But in considering this work, Bukofzer has observed that "... technical constrictions stimulated rather than impeded his [Bach's] creative imagination."¹ Not only did Bach excel in his treatment of strict forms, but also in the composition in a strict form for a restricted medium.

¹Music in the Baroque Era, p. 302.

CHAPTER I

WORKS FOR UNACCOMPANIED VIOLIN BEFORE BACH'S

CHACONNE

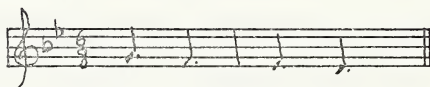
The late seventeenth century was an important period for the development of the violin. By this time, the technique of polyphonic playing on a stringed instrument had been fully developed, particularly on the violin, by such composers as Westhoff, Biber and J. J. Walther. Although none of these men had written unaccompanied music for a stringed instrument on such a scale as even one of the Bach works was to achieve, the technical and musical advances in violin playing that culminated in the works of Bach can be said to begin with these men. It was through the imagination and foresight of these composers as well as of Corelli and other Italians that violin composition and playing was able to reach its first maturity. It is in works like those to be discussed next that the groundwork for the achievements of J. S. Bach is laid.

Biber: The Passacaglia in G Minor for Unaccompanied Violin

In 1675, H. F. von Biber (1644-1704) wrote a cycle of fifteen sonatas for violin and continuo called the Mystery

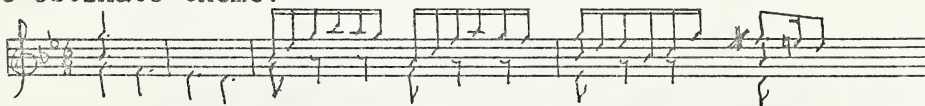
Sonatas. Included in this set is a passacaglia for unaccompanied violin. From a technical point of view, these sonatas illustrate some of the important advances of the German school of violin playing in the late seventeenth century. These include multiple stops, scordatura and the use of high positions. The sonatas are important also for the development of the variation principle which extended instrumental structures and promoted idiomatic figuration for the violin.

Biber's Passacaglia in G Minor is the first known example of a more extended composition for unaccompanied violin.¹ It is built on the first type of ostinato bass which is repeated sixty-five times:



Ex. 2. Biber: Ostinato Bass of Passacaglia in G Minor.

The fundamental difference between this passacaglia and Bach's Chaconne is that the former is built on a strict ostinato bass while the latter is not. In the passacaglia, the ostinato line is never ornamented. The only thing that changes occasionally is the length of time each note is sustained, as may be seen in the following two statements of the ostinato theme:



Ex. 3. Biber: Passacaglia. Measures 19-22.

¹The autograph manuscript of this work is preserved at the Staatsbibliothek in Munich.

To compensate for the monotony of the relentless ostinato, there is a considerable amount of variation written over it, about which Bukofzer says, "This example of systematic, yet imaginative use of the patterned variation was a fore shadow of the monumental Chaconne of Bach."¹ A further comment comparing the two works is offered by Boris Schwarz:

A comparison between Biber's Passacaglia and Bach's Chaconne suggests itself, especially as both are composed for unaccompanied violin. While Biber's work lacks Bach's towering imagination, it is a meritorious forerunner, and certain technical procedures point to Bach's acquaintance with Biber's achievements.²

Biber's Passacaglia assumes a position of considerable importance in the development of the unaccompanied solo literature. He showed remarkable independence in his treatment of the violin by stressing polyphonic playing, a style that was to become a characteristic of the German baroque school of playing. It is difficult to imagine the unaccompanied violin works of Bach without these previous experiments in multiple stops. Biber's work also demonstrates an early use of the continuous-variation principle--the same principle which was to govern the construction of the Bach Chaconne. Although Biber's music may not have had a direct influence on that of Bach, these certain aspects of his style

¹Music in the Baroque Era, p. 116.

²"The Mis-Tuned Violin", Saturday Review, August 31, 1963, p. 39.

indicate that he was at least a significant forerunner.

Westhoff: Suite for Unaccompanied Violin

In 1683, Johann Paul von Westhoff (1656-1705) wrote a composition entitled Suite pour le violon sans basse.¹ It is a seventeenth-century example of a work for unaccompanied violin in cyclic form. The movements are in the traditional late seventeenth-century suite or sonata da camera order: prelude, allemande, courante, sarabande and gigue.

There are only a few elements in the styles of this work and the partitas of Bach that can be compared directly. One of these elements is the cyclic form. Another element is the common use by both Westhoff and Bach of block chords as well as the use of arpeggiated chords.



Ex. 4. Westhoff: Prelude of Suite Pour le Violon Sans Basse.

There are also similarities in the beginning of Westhoff's

¹See Karl Gerhartz, ed., Meisterwerke fuer Violine allein (Cologne: Verlag Fischer und Jagenberg, 1921).

sarabande and those of Bach. However, in a comparison of Westhoff's work as a whole with the partitas of Bach, these examples become insignificant and are perhaps little more than coincidental. Bach's allemande, courante, and gigue show little, if any, similarity in style with the corresponding movements of Westhoff's suite. Therefore, it would appear that Westhoff's work was not a direct influence on the partitas of Bach. The importance of this work is that it indicates the composer's conviction that the technique of composition for the unaccompanied violin had reached a stage where it had enough diversity of styles to support a series of movements placed together as an extended composition in cyclic form.

Pisendel and Geminiani

Although the three partitas of Bach have a definite forerunner in the seventeenth-century Westhoff suite, it is not absolutely certain whether any sonata for unaccompanied violin antedated those of Bach or not. Francesco Geminiani (1680-1762) and Johann Georg Pisendel (1687-1755), who were both contemporaries of Bach, each wrote a sonata for unaccompanied solo violin. However, neither work is dated.¹ The Pisendel composition, consisting of a prelude, allegro, gigue and double, is less conventional in its over-all con-

¹For a further discussion of this matter, see W.C. Gates, "The Literature for Unaccompanied Violin" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1949), p. 77.

struction than any of the Bach sonatas. The movement which most clearly compares to the style of the Bach movements in the corresponding position is the first movement, with its improvisatory characteristics.¹



Ex. 5. Pisendel: Prelude of Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin in A Minor.

The Sonata in B-flat major by Geminiani is the only known complete sonata for unaccompanied violin in the Italian violin literature up to the time of Pietro Nardini. The plan of the sonata is that of the regular Italian sonata da chiesa: adagio, vivace, affettuoso, and giga. Bach did not include a gigue in any of his sonatas. This fact, together with the divergence in style of the first movements, indicates that regardless of which works were produced first, neither composer imitated the other. The same may be said of the relationship between Pisendel and these two composers, and for the same reasons. It is significant to note that if

¹Bruno Stuedeny, ed., Sonata in A minor (Munich: Wunderhornverlag, 1911).

either Pisendel or Geminiani did write their works after Bach wrote his, neither attempted to imitate the most imposing forms of the Bach compositions, namely the fugue and the chaconne.

In the history of violin music, the Bach sonatas and partitas represent a blending of the German and Italian tradition of the past. The heritage of the Italians is largely external, with the sonatas resembling the sonata da chiesa and the partitas resembling the sonata da camera. The polyphonic style with its multiple stops is a continuation of the German violin tradition of an earlier generation, notably that of Biber. This tradition is also apparent in certain variation movements such as the chaconne even though Bach's conception reached far greater proportions than ever before.

However, the examination of the works of Bach's predecessors and contemporaries only tends to emphasize the fact that his works for unaccompanied violin are incomparable. Although most of the elements of his style in the treatment of the solo violin may be found in the works of many other composers, no other composer was able or even tried to successfully combine these elements in compositions of comparable magnitude.

CHAPTER II

THE CHACONNE IN D MINOR BY

J. S. BACH

The Autograph Manuscript

The autograph manuscript of the six unaccompanied works for violin by J. S. Bach (BWV 1001-1006) is owned by the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. It consists of twenty-four numbered leaves (forty-two written sides) with the title: "Sei Solo. / à Violino / senza / Basso / accompagnato. Libro Primo / da / Joh: Seb: Bach. / Ao. 1720."¹ The Chaconne begins on the verso side of page thirteen and continues until the verso side of page fifteen with twelve systems to a page.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the manuscript was carefully kept in the estate of the Bach family, probably by Christiane Louisa who was the third child of Johann Christian Bach. In 1890, the autograph came into the possession of Eusebius Mandyczewski, who was the librarian of the Museum of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. Be-

¹Wolfgang Schmieder, Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der Werke Johann Sebastian Bachs. (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Haertel, 1961), p. 561. The letters BWV refer to the numbering of Bach's works in this thematic catalogue.

cause the manuscript was so clearly written, there was some doubt as to whether in fact it was Bach's autograph. Mandy-czewski corresponded with Johannes Brahms about this newly-found manuscript, and said that he had consulted with Spitta and the Bachausgabe, but in both cases this example was unknown. However, a comparison of hand writing proved that these works were indeed in Bach's own hand. Brahms sought to investigate this matter and looked for further evidence, but his attempts failed, and the manuscript was forgotten.

In 1906, the autograph, which was by this time in the possession of a private collector named Wilhelm Rust, was brought to the attention of Joseph Joachim. He recognized it as a fair copy, and together with Andreas Moser, published it in 1908. In 1917, the Koeniglichen Bibliothek in Berlin (now the Staatsbibliothek) acquired the autograph from the estate of Rust.

The Anna Madgalena autograph of these works is also owned by the Staatsbibliothek, but is presently located in the library in Marburg. In this manuscript, which was copied between 1725 and 1733-34, the hand writing is very similar to the original. In comparing the two copies, one finds that the spacial divisions and the manner in which the notes are written are almost identical.¹

Because J.S. Bach's autograph is such a clean

¹For further discussion of this autograph, see Sidney J. Tretick, "An Analysis of Performance Practices for the J.S. Bach Chaconne Based Upon the Anna Magdalena Manuscript" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1957).

copy, there is some speculation that 1720 was not necessarily the year of composition of these works, but rather the year of final organization, perhaps for some special occasion or dedication in Coethen. This theory is further upheld by evidence which shows that individual movements were written before 1720, and that these six works were not necessarily written in the order which appears in the autograph. There are traces which indicate that these works could have been conceived as early as the Weimar period.¹

The Chaconne in Relation to the Three Partitas

During the early baroque period, the suite (partita) became a standardized form and the order of dances was firmly established. This form was invented by German clavier composers, such as Froberger, and was later adopted by the Italians in their chamber sonatas and by the French in their clavier compositions. The core of the traditional suite consisted of the allemande, the courante, the sarabande and the gigue. The French, however, usually added an overture at the beginning and optional dances (in German, Galanterien) between the sarabande and the gigue. These included the gavotte, the minuet, the rigaudon and the bourrée. This form returned to Germany and was used extensively by J.S. Bach.

¹For further discussion, see Neue Bach Ausgabe, Kritischer Bericht, Serie VI, Band I. (Kassel: Baerenreiter Verlag, 1958), pp. 25-35.

Bach composed his set of six unaccompanied works for violin while he was employed as Kapellmeister at the court of Prince Leopold in Coethen. It was during this time that Bach became involved with the problems of string technique, particularly those related to the violin. He was undoubtedly familiar with the techniques of his predecessors, such as Westhoff and Biber, but he developed and enriched those techniques with an astonishing fullness.¹ The six years at Coethen marked the high point and the conclusion of Bach's development as a violinist.

Bach used the Italian name partita for his three suites for violin although they contain many French titles. The three sonatas, on the other hand, are written exclusively with Italian titles.

In their formal construction, the three sonatas show great similarity. They all adhere to the traditional four movements of the sonata da chiesa (slow-fast-slow-fast), with a fugue as a second movement. In all three works, the slow (third) movement is the only movement in a key other than the tonic.

Contrary to these strictly-conceived works, the three partitas, which in the autograph manuscript alternate with the sonatas, display a great variety of forms. All

¹Boris Schwarz, "Violinmusik," Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 14 vols., ed. Friedrich Blume (Kassel: Baerenreiter, 1949-68), XIII, 1729.

three of these partitas are remarkably irregular in their formation. The first Partita in B minor has all the component parts of the suite except the gigue. These include an allemanda, an Italian corrente, a sarabande, and a concluding tempo di borea. Each of these dances is followed by a double which is an étude-like variation. According to Spitta,¹ Bach chose the bourrée in place of the customary gigue because the latter was ill adapted to variation. The third Partita in E major completely abandons the pattern of the traditional clavier suite and adopts a free arrangement of pieces customary in an orchestral suite. Unlike the others, this partita begins with a prelude.

Although the second Partita in D minor does contain the usual four movements in their usual order, it is nevertheless irregular. In this case, the giga is followed by a ciaccona. "It is longer than all the rest of the Suite put together," says Spitta, "and it must not be considered as the last movement of it, but as an appended piece: the Suite proper concludes with the gigue."²

An examination of the six unaccompanied works for violoncello reveals their striking regularity in comparison with the partitas for violin.³ Each suite begins

¹Johann Sebastian Bach (2 vols.: London: Novello, 1899). Modern reprint. New York: Dover Publications, 1951, p. 94.

²Ibid., p. 95.

³See page 19 for a table comparing the organization of the violin sonatas and partitas with the violoncello suites.

with a prelude which is followed by an allemande, a courante and a sarabande. Then Bach inserts one of three different kinds of optional movements. The first two suites present pairs of minuets, the next two, pairs of bourrées, and the final two, pairs of gavottes. Each suite concludes with a gigue. From all this, it becomes evident that while the violin partitas completely differ from one another in form, the violoncello suites entirely agree.

Although one might think it odd that Bach chose to conclude the Partita in D minor with such a gigantic movement as the Chaconne, perhaps it is not so surprising when one considers this movement in the context of the other partitas. As noted from the above discussion, it is apparent that every partita, including the one in D minor, has some type of peculiarity. One theory in this matter could be formulated from the discussion in Part I of this chapter: that is, Bach did not necessarily compose the movements of these partitas at the same time. Therefore, he may have composed the Chaconne as an independent work, and because it was in the same key, he may have added it to the end of the D minor partita at a later date. This explanation, however, does not clarify Bach's reason for including this immense movement in an already long work.

Spitta is convinced that the Chaconne is in its rightful place:

TABLE 1

BACH'S WORKS FOR UNACCOMPANIED STRINGS

<u>Violin Works</u>	<u>Violoncello Works</u>
Sonata I: Adagio (G minor) { Fuga Siciliano Presto	Suite I: Prelude (G major) Allemande Courante Sarabande Menuets I and II (Menuet I da capo) Gigue
Partita I: Allemanda (B minor) (double) Corrente (double) Sarabande (double) Tempo di borea (double)	Suite II: Prelude (D minor) Allemande Courante Sarabande Menuets I and II (Menuet I da capo) Gigue
Sonata II: Grave (A minor) { Fuga Andante Allegro	Suite III: Prelude (C major) Allemande Courante Sarabande Bourrées I and II (Bourrée I da capo) Gigue
Partita II: Allemanda (D minor) Corrente Sarabanda Giga Ciaccona	Suite IV: Preludium (E-flat Allemande major) Courante Sarabande Bourrées I and II (Bourrée I da capo) Gigue
Sonata III: Adagio (C major) { Fuga Largo Allegro assai	Suite V: Prelude (C minor) Allemande Courante Sarabande Gavottes I and II (Gavotte I da capo) Gigue
Partita III: Preludio (E major) Loure Gavotte en ron- deau Menuets I and II Bourrée Gigue	Suite VI: Prelude (D major) Allemande Courante Sarabande Gavottes I and II (Gavotte I da capo) Gigue

It is the principle of the suite which animates the organism of this Chaconne. In both there are movements and groups of movements of different characters in juxtaposition which must be all in the same key. And so the union of the Chaconne with the suite had at least a still deeper issue: the amalgamation of two equally complete forms to a more perfect whole, so as to give the greatest possible importance and value to the idea which permeates them both.¹

Analysis of the Chaconne

Willi Apel defines a chaconne as "a regularly recurrent harmonic structure without a clearly recognizable bass." He goes on,

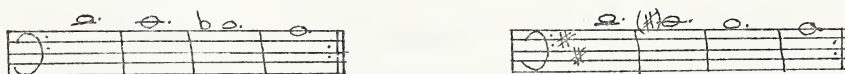
The frequently given interpretation of Bach's Chaconne as an ostinato composition is hardly convincing. Although with a reiterated scheme of harmonies it is often possible to reconstruct to some extent an ostinato, such a procedure leads, in the case of Bach's Chaconne to a clearly derivative bass line, which Bach never would have chosen as a point of departure.²

However, this interpretation of the chaconne contradicts that of Ebenezer Prout, who says: "In Bach's case, where a bass line was not to be maintained throughout by an unaccompanied violin, it is implied rather than audibly stated,

¹J.S. Bach, Vol. II, p. 98.

²"Chaconne," Harvard Dictionary of Music, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 142.

but none the less clearly present."¹ Bukofzer mentions that "the celebrated Chaconne in d minor is built on a combination of the first and second types of chaconne bass."² These are as follows:



Ex. 6. First and Second Types of Chaconne Bass.

Of course, one cannot say that this four-note phrase was the sole foundation upon which the entire Chaconne was built, because, although it is always implied, it is not always present in its original form. However, it was essential that Bach should select a free treatment of the ostinato bass in this Chaconne, since the thematic material and all of its polyphony were conceived to be produced upon a solo violin. Because Bach wrote many imaginative and intricate variations, the relentless ostinato had to be sacrificed in order to accommodate the technical restrictions of a solo violin.

The notes of the theme are often dispersed through different octaves in the figurations so that their connection is not always easy to recognize, as is shown by the following

¹"Chaconne," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed., 10 vols., ed. Eric Blom (London: Macmillan, 1954-61), II, p. 150.

²Music in the Baroque Era. p. 290.

example:



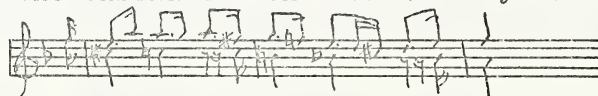
Ex. 7. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 37-40.¹

Thus, the ostinato pattern becomes more of a "melodic trend," and makes an unpredictable yet inevitable descent from tonic to dominant. It may descend to the dominant directly as in the opening theme, or by an indirect route as in the first few variations or as in the opening of the major section:



Ex. 8. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 133-136.

It may move directly along the scale, or it may also include all of the chromatic tones on its way down:



Ex. 9. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 18-19

Very often it lies hidden in the intricacies of the passage work:

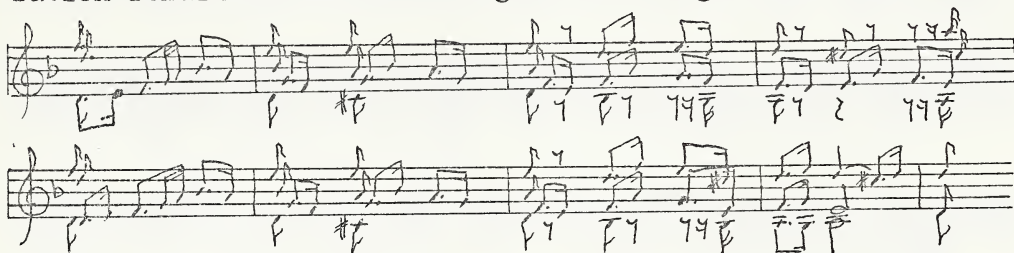


Ex. 10. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 29-32.

¹J. S. Bach, Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke, Drei Sonaten und Drei Partiten fuer Violino Solo, ed. Guenther Hauswald (Kassel: Baerenreiter, 1969). This source is used for all the musical examples in Chapter II.

Four different types of variation are evident in the Chaconne:

(a) those in which the figuration of the particular variation remains the same throughout the eight measures:



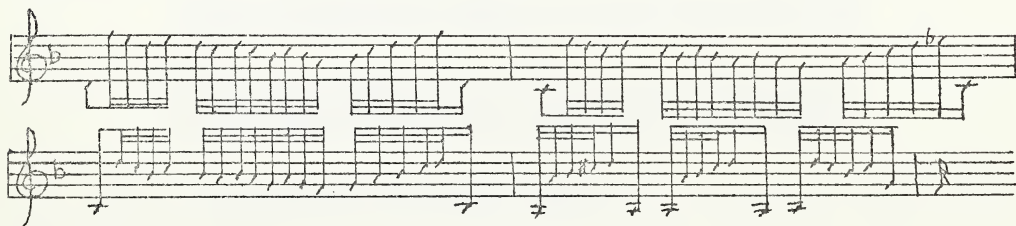
Ex. 11. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 9-17.

(b) those in which the figuration undergoes alteration in the fifth measure:



Ex. 12. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 25-33.

(c) those in which the variation is four measures in length:



Ex. 13. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 121-125.

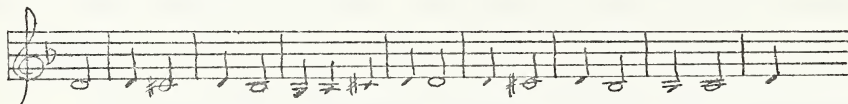
(d) those in which several adjacent variations are unified by some idea common to all:



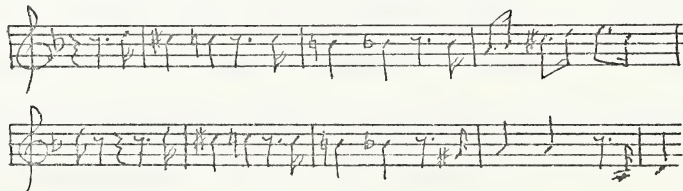
Ex. 14. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 89-121.

Sometimes the variations appear in pairs, the second of the pair usually developing and expanding on the content of the first.

Bach uses three main ostinato themes¹ in the Chaconne, with variations of the bass patterns often appearing in the upper voices:

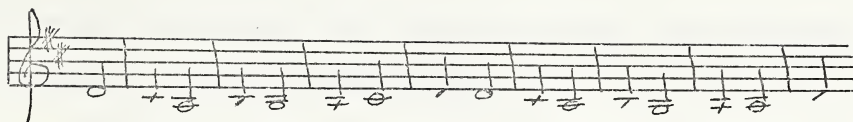


(Principal Ostinato Bass)



(Chromatic Ostinato Bass)

¹Spitta, in his analysis, includes two other themes, making a total of five. These extra themes, however, are not in the bass, but are variations of the bass ostinato patterns and appear in the upper voices. See J.S. Bach, Vol. II, pp. 95-97. These two themes are discussed on pages 25 -26.

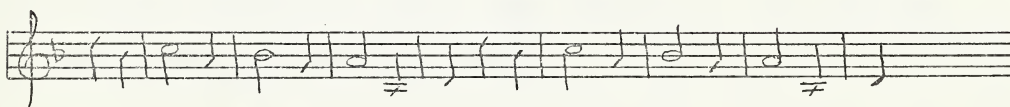


(Major Ostinato Bass)

Ex. 15. Bach's Three Ostinato Themes.

The principal ostinato bass of the Chaconne usually has a clear harmonic relationship to the thematic material of the upper voices. In the initial statement of the theme, the harmonic and melodic movement are in close juxtaposition to each other, making the ostinato bass always audible and prominent in relation to the remainder of the structure. The chromatic ostinato theme, however, is generally less perceptible to the listener. The heavily-embellished and florid thematic treatment in these variation passages makes recognition of the ostinato difficult. Through the course of the major section, the major theme is developed very freely.

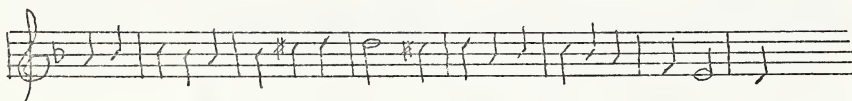
Spitta's two "extra" themes both occur between the chromatic theme and the ostinato theme of the major section. His "third" theme begins in measure 49 and continues until measure 81, but it is never in a simple form. Without the ornaments, it is as follows:



Ex. 16. Spitta's "Third" Ostinato Theme.

As this theme develops, the skips of thirds are enlarged into tenths or inverted into sixths.

Spitta's "fourth" subject, which is treated freely, appears in measure 97 (the arpeggiated string-crossing section) and continues under many guises until measure 121:



Ex. 17. Spitta's "Fourth" Theme.

By this system, the major ostinato section is now theme five.

When the minor mode returns, all five themes appear again at some point: the third until measure 229: the fifth (in the form adopted in measure 161) combined with the second until measure 237: the fourth until measure 241: and again the third until measure 249. The work concludes with a modified version of the principal theme.

The following table diagrams the structural analysis of the chaconne theme and each of its thirty-two variations. It includes the particular type of variation as described previously on page twenty-three and twenty-four, and the particular theme of each variation as outlined by Spitta, as well as the complete harmonic analysis of each measure. The purpose of the harmonic analysis is to show the various methods by which Bach arrives at the dominant at regular four-measure intervals.

TABLE 2 ANALYSIS OF THE BACH CHACONNE

Number of Variation	Measure Number	Type of Variation	Spitta's Theme	HARMONIC ANALYSIS									
				I	II ⁷ V ⁷ —	I VI —	IV I V	I	II ⁷ V ⁷ —	I VI —	I VII ⁷ —	II ⁷ V ⁷ —	—
1	9-16	a	1	I	II ⁷ V ⁷ —	I VI —	V	I	II ⁷ V ⁷ —	I VI —	—	—	—
2	17-24	a	2	I	V — —	IV II —	I V —	I	V — —	IV II —	—	—	—
3	25-32	b	1	I	IV V ⁷ —	I IV —	IV ⁷ V —	I	IV V ⁷ —	I IV —	—	—	—
4	33-40	b	2	I — V ⁷ / _V	V V ⁷ / _N —	IV — II	I V —	I	V V ⁷ / _N —	IV — —	—	—	—
5	41-48	a	1	I	IV V ⁷ / _N —	IV	V	IV I —	V V ⁷ / _N —	IV	—	—	—
6	49-56	a	3	I — V ⁷ / _{III}	⁴ / _{VII} — V ⁷ / _{VI}	VI — V ⁷ / _V	V	I — IV	⁴ / _{VII} — III	VI — II	—	—	—
7	57-64	b	3	I — IV	⁴ / _{VII} — III	VI — II	I V —	I — IV	⁴ / _{VII} — III	VI — II	—	—	—
8	65-72	a	3	I — V ⁷ / _{III}	⁴ / _{VII} — V ⁷ / _{VI}	VI — V ⁷ / _V	V	I — V ⁷ / _{III}	VII ⁷ — V ⁷ / _{VI}	VI — V ⁷ / _V	—	—	—

ANALYSIS OF THE BACH CHACONNE (cont.)

9	65-72	a	3	I - IV	VII - III	IV	V	I - $\sqrt[7]{V}$	V - $\sqrt[7]{V}$	IV - VII	I - V
10	81-88	b	1	I $\sqrt[7]{V}$ -	V $\sqrt[7]{V}$ -	IV $\sqrt[7]{VI}$ -	V	I	V ⁴	VI	V
11	89-96	d	1	I	II ⁷ - V ⁷	I	II - V	I - VI	$\sqrt[7]{VI}$	IV I II ⁷	I ⁴ V -
12	97-104	d	4	I - VI	$\sqrt[7]{V}$	IV VII ⁷ I	IV V -	I - VI	$\sqrt[7]{V}$	IV I V	I V -
13	105-112	d	4	I - I ⁷	II - $\sqrt[7]{VI}$	VI - II ⁷	I ⁴ V -	I I [#] $\sqrt[7]{V}$	$\sqrt[7]{V}$ -	III $\sqrt[7]{V}$ IV	$\sqrt[7]{V}$ V -
14	113-120	d	4	I IV I	$\sqrt[7]{V}$ V -	$\sqrt[7]{V}$ IV -	VII ⁷ I VII ⁷	I [#] I III $\sqrt[7]{VI}$	b ⁴ VII ⁷ - $\sqrt[7]{VI}$	VI IV I	$\sqrt[7]{V}$ V -
15	121-124	c	1	I	V - $\sqrt[7]{VI}$	VI	I IV V				
16	125-132	a	1	I	II ⁷ V ⁷ -	I VI -	IV I ⁴ V ⁷	I [#] -	$\sqrt[7]{V}$ VII ⁷ -	$\sqrt[7]{V}$ VI I	$\sqrt[7]{V}$ V -
17	133-140	a	5	I	V III -	IV II -	I ⁴ V -	I	V III -	IV II -	I ⁴ V -
18	141-148	a	5	I - $\sqrt[7]{V}$	V	VI II -	V	I	V	IV III IV ⁷	VII V -
19	149-152	c	5	I $\sqrt[7]{V}$ -	V - $\sqrt[7]{VI}$	VI - $\sqrt[7]{V}$	V				

ANALYSIS OF THE BACH CHACONNE (cont.)

20	153-160	a	5	I	V	$\sqrt[7]{N}$	V	I	V	VII	V
21	161-168	d	5	I	V	$\text{VI} - \sqrt[7]{N}$	V	I	V	$\sqrt[7]{N}$	V
22	169-176	d	5	I	V	$\sqrt[7]{N}$	V	$\text{I} - \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{I} - \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{IV} - \text{VI}$	$\text{I}^4 \text{V}$
23	177-184	a	5	I	$\text{I} \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{VI} - \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{IV} \text{V} -$	$\text{I} \text{VI} \text{I}$	$\text{I}^7 \text{V} -$	$\sqrt[7]{N} \text{IV} -$	V
24	185-192	d	5	I	$\sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{IV} \text{II} -$	V	I	$\sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{IV}^7 \text{V} -$	$\text{I} \text{V} -$
25	193-200	d	5	I	$\text{II}^7 \text{I} -$	$\text{IV} \sqrt[7]{N} -$	V	I	$\text{V} \sqrt[7]{N} -$	$\sqrt[7]{N} -$	$\text{I}^4 \text{V} -$
26	201-208	a	5	I^7	$\text{VI} - \text{VI}^7$	$\text{I}^7 \text{II} \text{V} -$	$\sqrt[7]{N} \text{V} -$	$\text{I} - \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{IV} \text{II} \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{V} - \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{VI} \text{V} -$
27	209-216	a	1	$\text{I} \text{VI} -$	V	IV	V^7	I	$\text{IV}^7 - \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{VI} - \text{IV}$	V
28	217-224	a	1&3	I	V	I	$\text{IV} \text{V} -$	$\text{I} - \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{VII} - \sqrt[7]{N}$	$\text{VI} - \text{VII}^7$	$\text{I} \text{V} -$
29	225-228	c	3	$\text{I} - \text{IV}$	$\text{VII} - \text{III}$	IV	V				

ANALYSIS OF THE BACH CHACONNE (cont.)

30	229-236	a	2&5	I	V	$\overline{\text{VI}}^7$	V	I	V	$\overline{\text{VI}}^7$	V
31	237-240	a&c	4	I	$\overline{\text{VII}}^7$	$\overline{\text{VI}}^7$	V				
32	241-248	a	3	I - IV	$\overline{\text{VII}}^7 \overline{\text{VIII}} \text{III}$	$\overline{\text{VI}}^7 \overline{\text{VI}} -$	V	I - $\frac{\sqrt[7]}{\sqrt{\text{III}}}$	$\overline{\text{VII}} - \frac{\sqrt[7]}{\sqrt{\text{VI}}}$	$\overline{\text{VI}} - \overline{\text{V}}$	V
Theme	249-257	a	1	I	$\text{II}^7 \overline{\text{V}}^7 -$	I $\overline{\text{VI}} -$	$\overline{\text{IV}} \text{I I V}$	I $\overline{\text{VI}} \frac{\sqrt[7]}{\sqrt{\text{V}}}$	$\overline{\text{IV}} \frac{\sqrt[7]}{\sqrt{\text{N}}} \overline{\text{IV}}$	$\overline{\text{V}} - \text{I}$	I V I

CHAPTER III

ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE

Editions

For the performance and study of any baroque work, a reliable edition is the first essential. The performer should also consult the composer's autograph manuscript or a facsimile, if available, since this is the most reliable source of prime information. As previously discussed in Chapter II, the autograph of the Chaconne in D minor by J. S. Bach is extant.

For this discussion of the Bach Chaconne, the following editions have been examined:

J.S. Bach. Neue Ausgabe Saemtlicher Werke, Drei Sonaten und Drei Partiten fuer Violino Solo. Edited by Guenter Hausswald. Kassel: Baerenreiter, 1969.

_____. Six Sonatas and Partitas for Violin Solo. Edited by Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser. New York: International Music Co., 1942.

_____. Sonaten und Partiten fuer Violine Solo. Edited by Carl Flesch. New York: Peters Corporation, 1930.

_____. Sonatas for the Violin. Edited by Eduard Herrmann. New York: G. Schirmer, Inc.,

S. J. Tretick. "An Analysis of Performance Practices for the J. S. Bach Chaconne Based Upon the Anna Madgalena Manuscript." Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1957.

In a good edition, the original score should always be made distinct from editorial adjustments by means of variation in type or by some other device. Two of the editions, those of Joachim-Moser and Flesch, have included both the original manuscript version and the edited version on separate staves. Both editions claim to have conscientiously followed the autograph as a basis for their evaluation. Nevertheless, there are still some discrepancies between the Urtext version and that which is claimed to be the Urtext, as is shown in the following examples:



(Original)



(Joachim-Moser and Flesch)

Ex. 18. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 1-2.



(Original)



(Joachim-Moser and Flesch)

Ex. 19. Bach: Chaconne, Measure 220.

Many of the same discrepancies are found in both editions. Since the Joachim-Moser edition was one of the first Chaconne publications (1908) to use a double-stave system of printing, it would appear that the Flesch autograph score is actually only a copy of the faulty Joachim-Moser edition.

It is also interesting to note that Herrmann, in the Preface to his edition, says that it was his endeavor to keep

strictly in accord with the original. Yet he goes on to say:

In the celebrated Ciaconna, for instance, trills had to be omitted, chords completed, runs harmonically changed, the duration of notes prolonged, etc.¹

For these reasons, it is always valuable to consult the primary source as in the Neue Bach Ausgabe before proceeding to the actual details of bowing, fingering, and expression which must in the final analysis remain the responsibility of the individual player.

A. Notation of the Manuscript

In the original manuscript, Bach was not always explicit in his notation. He was vague with regards to phrasing, slurring, and the actual execution of the multiple stops and the two arpeggiated sections. However, the manuscript does show that Bach intended that the chords be notated in polyphonic "parts", that is, with a separate stem to each note. All of the editions examined except that of Hausswald have failed to do this, even though they claim to have followed the autograph. If these chords are written with only a single stem, the polyphonic structure is misrepresented. Bach usually indicated the contrapuntal movement clearly, and this is obscured by editors who have notated the multiple stops in block chords.

¹See the Preface to Herrmann's edition of the Bach Sonatas for the Violin.

None of the editions except Tretick's indicate that the autograph contains passages written in the French violin clef. These passages occur between measures 86-88 and 195-199. Since the notes go beyond the third position in both cases, Bach probably used this clef to avoid too many ledger lines.



(Anna Magdalena)

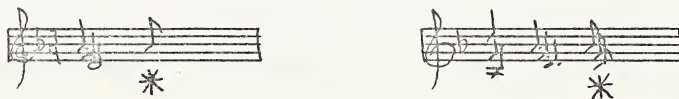


(Tretick)

Ex. 20. Bach: Chaconne, Measure 87.

B. Articulation

The articulation of multiple stops is directly dependent on their notation. This presents a problem in the Chaconne because Bach's notation of the multiple stops is vague and sometimes inconsistent. This inconsistency becomes apparent if one compares the notation of the opening measure of the work with that of measure 185:



Ex. 21. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 1 and 185.

The first chord of the piece has caused some controversy as to how Bach really intended it to be played:



(Original)



(Joachim-Moser)



(Flesch)

Ex. 22. Bach: Chaconne, Measure 1.

Measures 142-146 would be physically impossible to play on the violin if articulated according to Bach notation:



Ex. 23. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 142-146.

David Boyden explains the situation thus:

The fact is that violin notation of early times, especially as to rhythm, was approximate, and the polyphony is written in long note values to show the player the musical progression and to help him distinguish the melodic and harmonic functions of the different voice parts.¹

The player must decide for himself whether the articulation of a melodic voice is more important (as Boyden suggests), or if it is better to strive for the sustained "organ" effect of intervals and chords.

C. Tempo

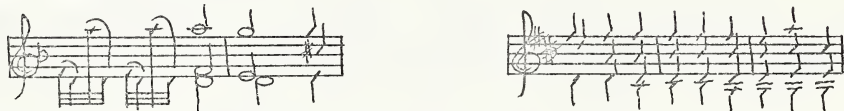
Although the different editions contain initial tempo markings from grave all the way to andante, most editors agree that the Chaconne should be played slowly. There is some disagreement, however, as to whether the same tempo

¹The History of Violin Playing (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 429.

should be maintained throughout. Szigeti states that the performer should strive for a rigid tempo throughout because great tempo fluctuations cannot result in a unified view of "this towering masterpiece".¹ Yet Eduard Herrmann says that the metronome marking which he assigns ($\text{♩} = 52$) ought not to be used for more than a few measures.² Herrmann's remark indicates a preference for a fairly liberal approach to a steady tempo, an approach which increases the improvisatory nature of the performance. This interpretation, however, would distort the basic chaconne rhythm and would destroy any unity between the principle theme and its variations.

D. Chordal Sketches

In the original manuscript, Bach did not write out the two arpeggiated sections. Instead, he showed a sample of only one beat in the first section, but nothing at all in the second section:



Ex. 24. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 89-90 and 201-203.

This shows that Bach's notational method was a part of the old tradition in which the performer used his own imagination to provide that which the notation only suggested.

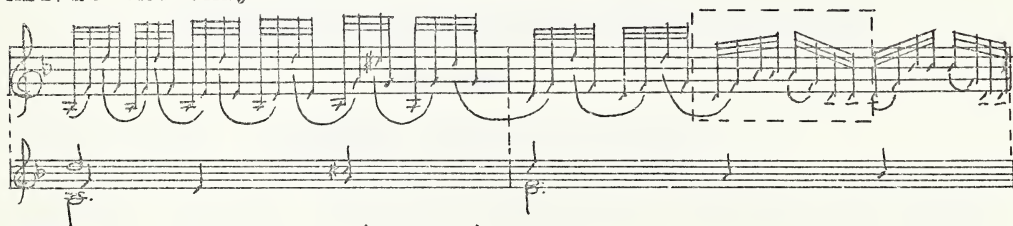
¹Szigeti on the Violin (London: Cassel & Co. Ltd., 1969), p. 122.

²See the Preface to the Sonatas for the Violin.

In reference to the edition co-authored by himself and Joseph Joachim, Andreas Moser states:

Whenever Bach has appended to chords of three or four notes the word "arpeggio", these are written out in the simplest possible form. The performer is at liberty to substitute others if those which are given should not seem to him sufficiently effective.¹

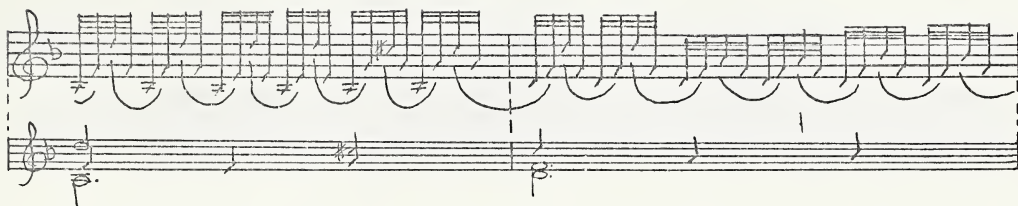
A comparison of the many editions since the one by Joachim and Moser shows the great variety of ways in which the first arpeggiated section may be interpreted. Flesch changes the bowing as well as the figuration after every eight-measure period in conformity with the eight-measure variations throughout the piece.² He believes that Bach, "who was opposed to pedantry of this type", did not intend the entire passage to be played in the manner in which the first arpeggio was notated. Flesch also maintains that it is an important principle of phrasing to change the figuration only on the second quarter of the measure in question. His is the only edition which has done so:



(Flesch)

¹See the Forward to Bach's Six Sonatas and Partitas.

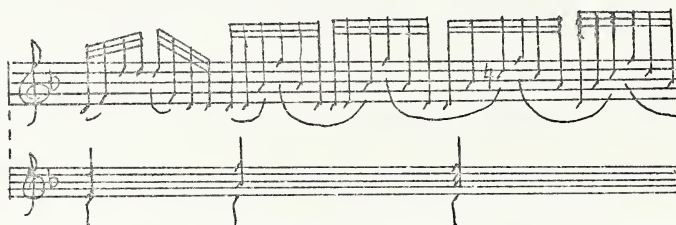
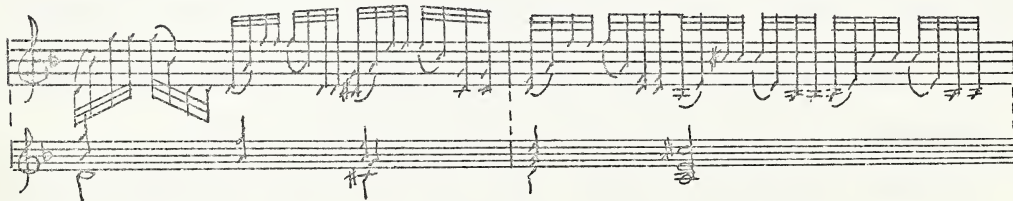
²The Art of Violin Playing (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1930), p. 155.



(Joachim-Moser)

Ex. 25. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 96-97.

Most of the editions retain Bach's figuration of groups of fours until at least measure 104, where they are changed to groups of six notes each:



(Flesch)

Ex. 26. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 103-105.

Tretick, however, offers an interesting variation by beginning the sextuplets in measure 103, which is before the end of that particular variation. This is done to avoid the double stop at the bottom of the first four-note chord of the section:

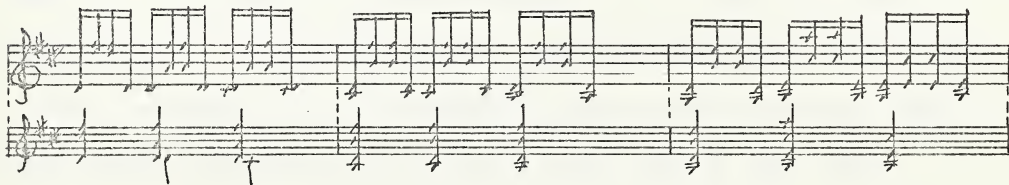
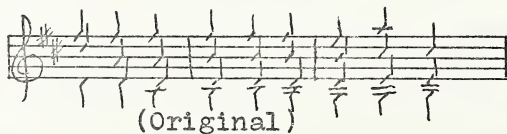


(Tretick)

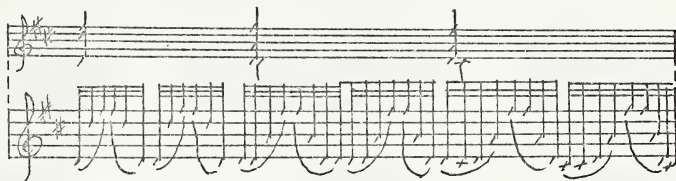
Ex. 27. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 103-104.

Even though Tretick's version is approached from the standpoint of baroque performance practices, it seems unnecessary to interrupt the regular flow of eight-measure variations by suddenly introducing a new figuration in the middle. Herrmann retains the groups of fours all the way to measure 112.

In the second section of the arpeggiated passages which begins in measure 201, most editors entirely abandon the previous method of articulation, although Bach gave no indication that this was necessary. The most common method is shown in editions by Joachim-Moser, Flesch, and Herrmann. Tretick, however, reverts back to the first system of arpeggios:



(Joachim-Moser)

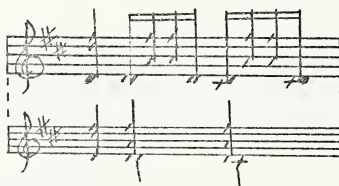


(Tretick)

Ex. 28. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 201-202.

In reference to the beginning of this section, Flesch states:

Observing the principle of the after-beat, I play instead of the original notation, my version:

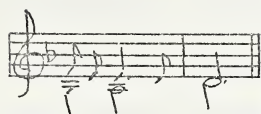


in which the arpeggios first start in on the second quarter. I find that a really significant phrasing calls for the sacrifice of these four notes. May Bach forgive me, I cannot do otherwise!¹

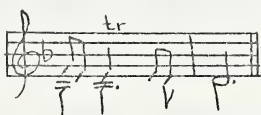
E. Ornamentation

There is an indication of only one ornament, a trill in measure 73, in Bach's autograph manuscript of the Chaconne. The following measure is sequential, but no trill is indicated, and most editors have taken it upon themselves to insert one here. Many editors have also included ornaments at the cadences separating the minor and major modal sections, and also at the end of the work:

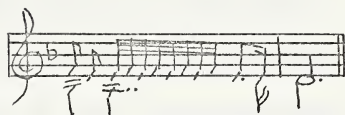
¹The Art of Violin Playing, p.157.



(Original)



(Flesch)



(Joachim-Moser)

Ex. 29. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 256-257.

F. Dynamics and Expression

Bach made no dynamic or expression indications in his manuscript of the Chaconne. However, this does not suggest that an expressive performance was not required:

However notated, violin music of this time [the eighteenth century] should not be, and was not intended to be, restricted to simple terraces of dynamics or a literal and uninspired rendition of the bare skeleton of the score.¹

Most editors have assigned a particular dynamic level to each variation, giving it a certain character. For this same purpose, Joachim-Moser and Flesch utilize such terms as espressivo, tranquillo, nobile, grazioso, deciso, and dolce. Herrmann specifies pesante for the last five measures. There are also long crescendo indications over many measures to create dramatic climaxes (see the first arpeggiated section).

The numerous alterations which editors have made were chiefly the result of interpolations by individual violinists who adapted the Chaconne to a personalized technique

¹Boyden, The History of Violin Playing, p. 493.

of playing. Although their knowledge and ideas of interpretation are invaluable to the modern school of violin playing, the editors have made little contribution to the contemporary violinist who wishes to perform this work with accuracy according to the original manuscript. Perhaps one of the best solutions to this problem is found in the Preface to the Bachrenreiter edition:

No attempt has been made to supply this edition with such aids to performance as fingerings and bowings, since the sheer difficulty of the works compels the player to decide upon his own solutions.¹

Performance Problems of the Chaconne

According to Leopold Auer, the Bach Chaconne in D minor is "unquestionably one of the most difficult violin compositions to perform in public."² Some of the problems in this work are a result of the type of composition it is--a theme with manifold variations for unaccompanied violin. Other problems arise out of Bach's apparently greater concern with the compositional aspects of the Chaconne than with the technical requirements demanded of the performer. To the performer, the Chaconne presents certain physical, mental and technical feats which appear to go beyond the limitations of what is violinistically feasible.

¹See the Preface to Bach's Drei Sonaten und Drei Partiten fuer Violino Solo.

²Violin Master Works and Their Interpretation (New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1925), p. 22.

Yet Spitta says that "the overpowering wealth of forms pouring from a few and scarcely noticeable sources displays the most perfect knowledge of violin technique."¹

A. Endurance

One of the greatest obstacles that the violinist will encounter in the performance of the Chaconne will be the tremendous amount of physical strength and stamina required to sustain a complete public performance of this work. Ordinarily, when playing a sonata with the piano or a concerto with an orchestra, a violinist has frequent opportunities for a rest while solo passages are played by the pianist or the tutti passages are played by the orchestra. But no such opportunities are present in the Chaconne, a continuous work requiring about fifteen minutes for performance. The task becomes even more difficult when one considers the control that is necessary in order for the performer to make the transition between variations as well as maintaining the relationship between the theme and all the variations to which it is subjected.

In order to locate those sections where the physical strain is most severe, the performer should play through the complete work frequently and become thoroughly acquainted with the nature of its physical demands. Then he will be able to find the moments in the work where a slight relaxation might be possible to allow for the gathering of new strength for the next difficult passage.

¹Johann Sebastian Bach, II, p. 97.

B. Memorization

Considering that the Chaconne is a relatively long work for a violinist to perform by himself, it would seem that memorization would be one of the major difficulties involved in its performance. This problem would perhaps seem even greater when one remembers that there is no musical support from either the piano or the orchestra to carry the performer over any memory slips that might occur. However, these difficulties are curtailed somewhat by the fact that the Chaconne is built in regular eight-measure sections. Each variation either develops the preceding one to a further extent, or it introduces an idea which is entirely different. In either case, the variations are distinctly sectionalized and can serve as landmarks to the violinist's memory whenever necessary.

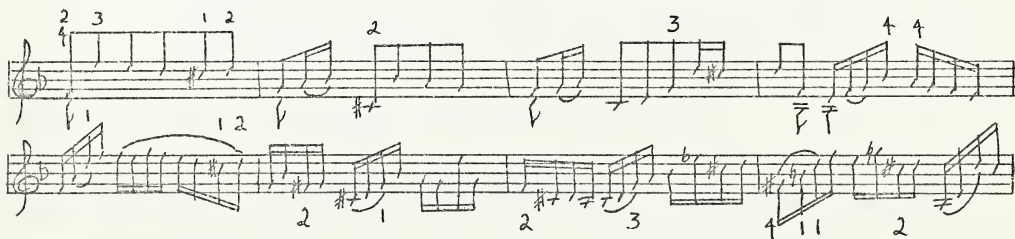
C. Out-of-Tune Strings

Because there is constant strain on the strings of the violin during the performance of the Chaconne, they are apt to go out of tune. For this reason, it would be wise to play this work in the middle of a recital so that the strings have an opportunity to adapt to the temperature of the recital hall. Then, if this problem persists, the violinist has two choices: he can carry on and adjust the left hand to the strings which are out of tune, or he can stop at the end of a section and re-tune the strings.

D. Specific Problems in Fingering

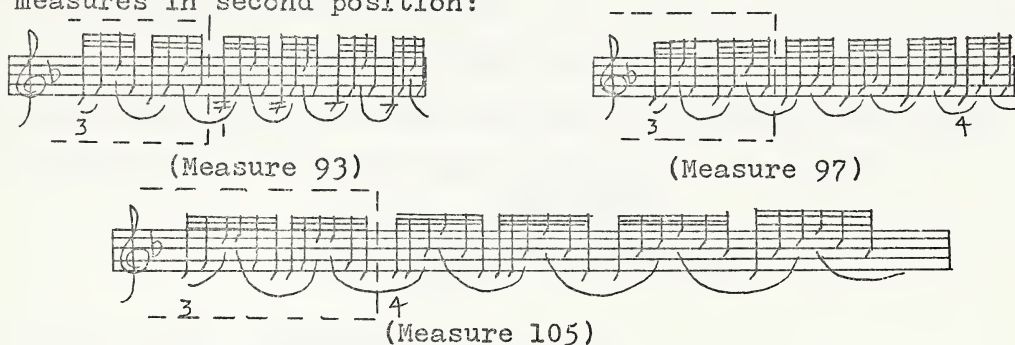
When the performer begins his search for a suitable fingering for a particular passage in the Chaconne, or in any work, there are many aspects to consider. These include his own technical ability, the size and shape of his left hand, the practicality of a fingering in a particular instance, and his own personal taste and preference. Therefore, since violin fingering is such a highly-personalized subject, and the Chaconne represents some of the most demanding technical difficulties, it becomes the responsibility of the individual to seek out his own solutions in order to perform this work.

When deciding upon a fingering for those passages in the Chaconne which have many possibilities, the most logical method is simply trial and error. The passage from measures 25 to 32 (which contains no multiple stops) is a case in point. The performer should start by playing the whole passage completely in first position, then in second position, and then in third position. By this method, it is possible to determine which groups of notes lie comfortably in which positions. Then, by shifts or extensions, the performer may combine all three to suit his purposes.



Ex. 30. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 25-32.

In measures 93, 97 and 105, the performer may find that he is able to produce a cleaner articulation of each note of the arpeggio if he plays the first beat of each of these measures in second position:



Ex. 31. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 93, 97, 105.

This alleviates the possible problem of the flatter fourth finger touching two strings.

Measure 133 is the beginning of the major modal section and is a complete contrast from the huge climax which precedes it. Therefore, this section is extremely hazardous and can create many problems, of which fingering and intonation are only two. To minimize the dangers, one solution is the playing of measure 133 in second position, where the left hand should perhaps have more control.

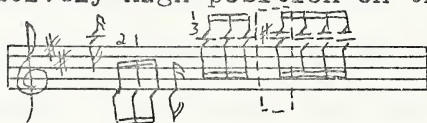


Ex. 32. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 131-134.

The best way to approach this measure is to have the left hand already in second position on the last beat of measure 132. This fingering produces a much smoother effect than

does the use of the first position, which would create a gap in the melodic line (between the G and the C-sharp) as a result of the movement of one finger to an augmented interval on an adjacent string.

In measure 175, there is a problem of intonation because the intervals, and therefore the fingers, are close together in a relatively high position on the violin:



Ex. 33. Bach: Chaconne, Measure 175.

If this measure were played in third position, the problem would occur at the diminished interval of the G and C-sharp. By this method, the G would be played with the fourth finger, and the C-sharp would be played with the third finger as close to the fourth as possible. Because of the nature of the fourth finger, it is difficult to get the third finger close enough behind it to be in tune. The solution to this problem is to play the whole measure in fourth position, where the two fingers used in playing the interval would now be the second and third fingers. Since the third finger is more curved than the fourth, the second finger now has more room to get closer to it.

Measures 181 and 187 present similar fingering problems, in that they both contain a minor triad:

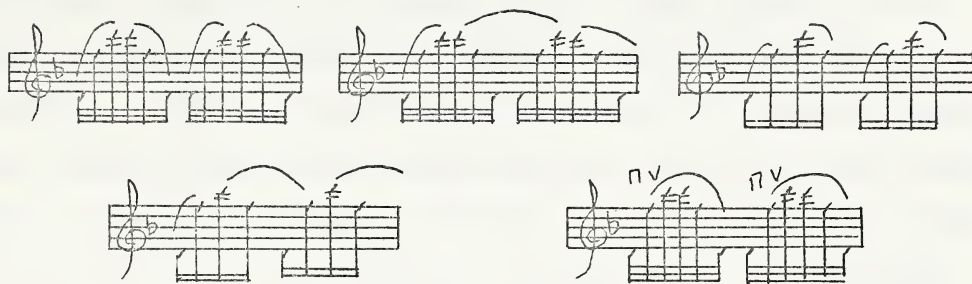


Ex. 34. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 181, 187.

Since neither of the triads offer the opportunity of using an open string, the only possible fingerings are in the first position with a fourth-finger extension, or in the second position with a first-finger extension. The latter is the better solution since, when the hand is in a fixed position, the extension downward with the first finger is more suitable to the hand than an extension upward. Therefore, if the bottom two notes of each triad are securely fixed in second position, the top note can be easily played with the first finger by the extension of a tone.

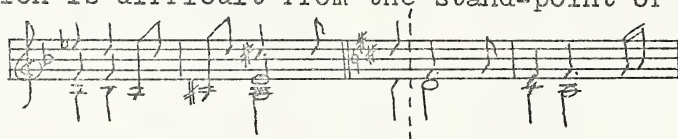
E. Specific Problems of Bowing

One of the greatest bowing problems in the Chaconne is the string-crossing section which occurs between measures 89 and 121. The difficulty begins when the performer strives to create an effective climax at the end of this section. In order to accomplish this, he must attempt to obtain the maximum amount of sound from his instrument. At the same time, he must ensure that the individual notes of each arpeggio are clearly articulated. Added to these considerations is the necessity of placing a certain amount of emphasis on the lowest pitches so that the harmonic progressions are clearly defined. The solution to the problems of this section requires some experimentation with different configurations and rhythms of the arpeggios as well as a variety of bowing combinations:



Ex. 35. Bowing Combinations.

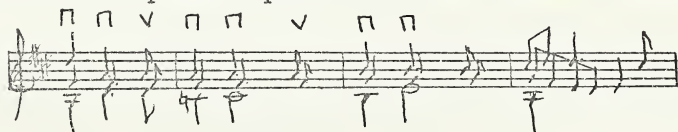
The transition from the D minor section to the D major section is difficult from the stand-point of bow control:



Ex. 36. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 131-134.

The physical tension created in the string-crossing and multiple stops which immediately precede the major section may cause the right arm muscles to become taut. Therefore, when the arm begins to relax in the quieter major section, the performer must exercise the utmost control to prevent the bow from jerking across the strings. This can be accomplished in part by bowing with the least amount of effort and by playing this passage in the middle of the bow, where the greatest amount of control is to be found.

The passage between measures 185 and 200 is a long succession of multiple stops:



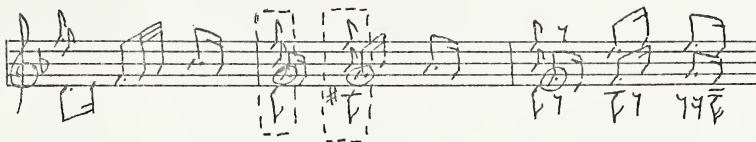
Ex. 37. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 185-188.

In order to achieve the "organ effect" where there is constant sound, the player must sustain each chord as much as possible. This is relatively simple when he is playing down-bow strokes followed by up-bow strokes, because the bow never has to leave the strings. However, when the performer wishes to play two successive down-bow strokes which are necessary in this passage, the bow has to leave the string at some point to prepare for the second down-bow stroke. One method to overcome the gap in sound is to sustain the first down-bow chord as much as possible. Then, with a very quick return of the bow, the second down-bow chord should be played slightly ahead of its rhythmic beat. Although this may seem to produce an almost syncopated movement, it does create a lengthening of each chord while at the same time reducing the amount of time that the bow is off the string.

F. Multiple Stops

For the violinist, multiple stops in any composition are usually problematic. However, because in the works of Bach such stops are treated polyphonically, the problems are even greater. Although the multiple stops may not be so numerous in the Chaconne as they are in the fugues, they still remain tremendously difficult for most performers.

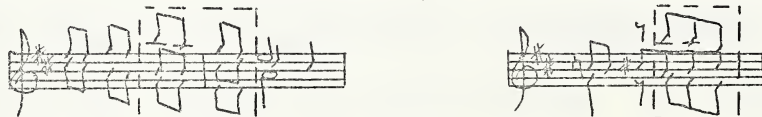
The first real problem occurs between measures 9 and 16:



Ex. 38. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 9-11.

Here the melodic line is not in its usual place at the top of the chord, but rather is contained in one of the inner voices. Therefore, the performer must play the chord and then must quickly return the bow to the D string so that the melody note will be "sustained". This must be done in one swift movement of the right arm.

There are only a few brief passages where the multiple stops are awkward for the left hand. Two of these instances occur at measures 147-148 and measure 180:



Ex. 39. Bach: Chaconne, Measures 147-148, and 180.

A solution to this problem is careful practice to acquaint the hand with the size and shape of the intervals.

Perhaps the most general point concerning the multiple stops is that a performer may tend to overlook many possibilities for varying the manner in which they are executed. Instead of the usual breaking of a four-note chord into two groups of two notes each, the violinist should seek out various methods of articulation. Experimentation of this kind will enable the performer to offer a more interesting interpretation of the Bach Chaconne.

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